

Book of Order Update Index 2025-2026

BOOK OF GOVERNMENT

G9-5A.1: A Teaching Elder may be called by a congregation to be a Pastor or Associate Pastor. Sessions may call a Teaching Elder as **Transitional Pastor**, or invite a Teaching Elder as Stated Supply Pastor or Occasional Supply Pastor. The Presbytery must approve all such positions. These are the only recognized callings for Teaching Elders in a congregational setting. The office of the “co-pastor” is not a constitutionally recognized calling in a local church. Except as otherwise provided in the *Book of Government*, the Pastor of the church shall be the Moderator of Session.

G10-7A.1.d: If a Transitional Pastor is called from outside the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and **seeks to transfer ordination**, the presbytery shall examine and transfer the pastor according to applicable provisions of this *Book of Government*.

G10-7A.1.e: If a Transitional Pastor from outside the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is not seeking to transfer ordination, the Session may extend an invitation in the same manner as a Stated Supply Pastor, except that the invitation will remain in effect during the period the congregation is seeking a Pastor.

Footnote 78: See *Acts of Assembly* 25-01 (p. 177)

G. 10-8B.1.c: The Presbytery shall appoint a Commission according to the stipulations of G.21-1C.2 to proceed with ordination and/or installation.

RULES FOR ASSEMBLY

VII:

VII. Communications; Overtures; and Proposed Amendments

- 7-1 A communication to the General Assembly is formal correspondence received by the Stated Clerk from other churches, inter-church agencies, and from other organized bodies outside the church proper having business with the Assembly.
- 7-2 The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Assembly reference for all communications.
- 7-3 An overture is the request of a Presbytery for action by the General Assembly upon a specific matter. **Since overtures to the General Assembly are the communication of the lower court, the higher court is responsible for the public dissemination of all overtures properly filed. The Stated Clerk shall provide for the public posting of any properly filed overture so that the overture is made accessible to the whole church within five (5) days of original receipt.**

- 7-4 All overtures proposing amendments to the *Book of Order* or these *Rules for Assembly* shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk at least sixty (60) days prior to the opening of the General Assembly (G.21.3D.2a). All other overtures shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk at least thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the General Assembly. No overtures received after the applicable filing date shall be considered by its Assembly convening in that year.
- 7-5 Except to the extent otherwise authorized by *Rules for Assembly* 7-6 and 7-7, no amendment to the *Book of Order* or these *Rules for Assembly* will be considered by the General Assembly unless it has first been presented to a presbytery in the form of an overture. When approved by a presbytery, an overture will be presented to the Assembly. A rejected overture may be presented to the Assembly, provided that:
1. The Ruling Elder commissioner to Presbytery, Teaching Elder, or Session who originally requested the rejected overture has provided written notification within 30 days to the Stated Clerk of that Presbytery of their desire for the rejected overture to be presented to the Assembly as provided for by the *Rules for Assembly* 7-5; and
 2. The Stated Clerk of that Presbytery has submitted to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, within 10 days, (a) the rejected overture as it was originally proposed and (b) a relevant extract, certified by the Stated Clerk of that Presbytery, from the minutes of the meeting at which that Presbytery rejected the overture. Extracts from provisional minutes are permitted. No such rejected overture may be received for consideration absent a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Assembly.
- 7-6 Permanent committees and ad-interim committees established by the General Assembly may propose amendments to the *Book of Order* or these *Rules for Assembly*; provided, however, that each such proposed amendment must be delivered to the Stated Clerk at least sixty (60) days prior to the opening of the General Assembly (G.21-3D.2a). No such proposed amendment received after the applicable filing date shall be considered by the Assembly convening in that year.
- 7-7 Nothing in this *Rule VII* will be deemed to prohibit a standing committee of the Assembly from taking action to approve, modify, or not approve any proposed amendment to the *Book of Order* or these *Rules for Assembly* that was referred to it (*Rule for Assembly* 9-5) or to prevent the Assembly from acting upon the report of a standing committee.

X.C.5-7:

5. Interviews Candidates for seminary equivalent educational programs
6. Oversees the four national written examinations
7. Exercises authority over all standardized national forms for the Ordination Process

XIII:

XIII. New Business

- 13-1** Any matter presented in any form that has not been received by the Stated Clerk prior to the opening of the General Assembly shall be treated as new business.
- 13-2** New business must be presented to the Assembly by noon of the second day of business, and each proposed item of new business that was not previously presented as an overture to a presbytery must include an explanation of why it was not so presented.
- 13-3** If an item of new business is received by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall refer the item to an appropriate standing committee and, in the case of any new business with a potential budget impact, to the National Leadership Team. Parties to whom an item is referred (e.g., standing committees and the National Leadership Team) shall receive and consider such reference, deliberate, and report to the Assembly as these Rules require. The National Leadership Team may assist the Stated Clerk in referring new business.
- 13-4** Amendments to the Constitution or to these *Rules for Assembly* shall not be received as new business under any circumstance.

ACTS OF ASSEMBLY

- 25-01** The 45th General Assembly RATIFIES an amendment to the *Book of Government*.
(Minutes 45-26)
- 25-20** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES changes to the *Rules for Assembly* VII section 7-3. (Minutes 45-44)
- 25-21** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES changes to the *Rules for Assembly* VII section 7-5. (Minutes 45-44)
- 25-22** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES changes to the *Rules for Assembly* XIII 13.
(Minutes 45-44)
- 25-23** The 45th General Assembly REQUESTS the Office of the General Assembly explore the feasibility of digital voting at future Assemblies. (Minutes 45-48)
- 25-26** The 45th General Assembly INSTRUCTS the Office of the General Assembly to digitize the minutes of the EPC's first 26 General Assemblies. (Minutes 45-54)
- 25-05** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES amendments to the *Book of Government* 11-2.
(Minutes 45-40)

- 25-06** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES amendments to the *Book of Government* 18-3E. (Minutes 25-40)
- 25-07** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES amendments to the *Book of Government* 19-4B. (Minutes 45-40)
- 25-08** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES amendments to the *Book of Government* 21-2D. (Minutes 45-40)
- 25-09** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES revisions to the Rules for Assembly X.C.5, eliminating “extraordinary” language and replace with CEEP, and X.C.7 to clarify MVC’s authority over all standardized forms in the ordination process. (Minutes 45-40)
- 25-10** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES amendments to Acts of Assembly 82-07 to clarify that all written exams are governed by the MVC and eliminate language of “extraordinary circumstances.” (Minutes 45-40)

Uniform Procedures on Candidacy and Ordination

1. Requirements for ordination shall be:
 - a. Seminary degree – Master of Divinity or equivalent that shall include Old and New Testament Survey, Old Testament Exegesis, New Testament Exegesis, Church History (with an emphasis on the Reformation), Apologetics, Leadership, Preaching, Evangelism, Missiology, Discipleship/Disciple-making, Pastoral Care and Counseling, and Ethics. In addition:
 - 1) Three courses in systematic theology (equivalent nine semester-hours). Competency in Reformed theology as expressed in the **Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms** shall be demonstrated through a standardized ordination exam governed by the Ministerial Vocation Committee.
 - 2) Original languages. The standard for ordination in the EPC is the ability to exegete competently the Scriptures in the original languages. This competency shall be demonstrated by a standardized open-book exegesis exam in either Greek or Hebrew, including a sermon manuscript based upon that exegesis, to be submitted within a one-week period. This exam shall be governed by the Ministerial Vocation Committee.
 - 3) “EPC specific” courses:
 - (a) EPC Polity
 - b. Care of the presbytery in accord with **G.11-2**;
 - c. Examinations – four written and one oral examination must be sustained;
 - 1) The written exams shall be under the authority of the Ministerial Vocation Committee

- d. Valid call;
 - e. Other evidence – Assurance those spiritual gifts needed for effective ministry are present and being developed.
2. All exceptions to fulfilling standards for ordination will be referred to the permanent Committee on Ministerial Vocation for a recommended course of action, including continuing education and reading requirements. The presbytery of jurisdiction shall, in conjunction with the Committee on Ministerial Vocation:
- 2-1. Mail necessary documentation (personal history, etc.) to the permanent committee for its review and counsel, and
 - 2-2. Proceed with process of ordination only after receiving recommendations from the permanent Committee on Ministerial Vocation.
3. Persons seeking membership within a presbytery may be received as enrolled members only upon evidence of a call endorsed by the presbytery.
4. Terms of call: The amount of annual vacation time: one month.
5. Terms of call: The amount of time to be given for study leave: two weeks, cumulative up to six weeks.

Ordained World Outreach career missionaries serving abroad shall be allowed to accumulate their study leave and funding for four years to be used in their fifth year in a program of study under the supervision of the World Outreach Director. Those in domestic service are limited to the standard three years' accumulation. Career missionaries shall be allowed \$800 per year for study leave.

See Act 94-25 (p.197). The 14th General Assembly amended this document, originally adopted in 1982 (Minutes 2-42), by dropping "Licensure" from the title as well as paragraphs 1, 4, and 5 having to do with licensure. (Minutes 14-37) The 19th General Assembly further amended this document in #5, "Terms of Call," by adding provision for career missionaries. (Minutes 19-31) The 32nd General Assembly modified section 1(c) to conform to G.10-4H (See Act 12-12, p. 200).

25-11 The 45th General Assembly APPROVES a new Act of Assembly to supersede Act of Assembly 12-12, eliminating the requirement for a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college/university. (Minutes 45-40)

25-12 The 45th General Assembly APPROVES requiring a candidate's criminal background checks be within a 3-year window, submitted to the Session prior to endorsing an individual for Candidacy. (Minutes 45-40)

- 25-13** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES requiring all candidates to undergo a standardized National Background Check conducted through the Office of the General Assembly and paid for by the Candidate's Presbytery prior to being approved for ordination. **(Minutes 25-40)**
- 25-14** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES requiring individuals seeking to be taken under care as Candidates to submit forms "Application for Candidacy" and "Preliminary Questionnaire" available on the EPC website. **(Minutes 45-40)**
- 25-15** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES requiring all candidates under care to have a current physical exam and a psychological exam (which includes the most current version of the MMPI), including a personal assessment with the psychologist administering the exam. **(Minutes 45-40)**
- 25-16** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES requiring all candidates, prior to final examination by the Presbytery, to submit a completed and current Personal Information Form. **(Minutes 45-40)**
- 25-19** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES ordained ministers drawing retirement income from the EPC 403(b)(9) Defined Contribution Retirement Plan be allowed to designate up to 100% of their retirement income for housing allowance as permitted by applicable regulations adopted pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code. **(Minutes 45-43)**
- 25-24** The 45th General Assembly ADOPTS a policy regarding approval and recording of ministers' terms of call, superseding the actions of the 18th and the 31st General Assemblies (*Acts 98-04, p. 185 and 11-08, p. 200*). **(Minutes 45-50)**
1. The initial terms of call shall be approved in public by the calling congregation and by either the Presbytery or by the Ministerial Committee of the Presbytery per G. 21-2D.1.f. using the forms found in the Book of Order and *Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees*.
 2. Changes in terms of call for all active TEs must be approved by the Ministerial Committee unless requested by the Presbytery itself. The changes may be notes as either a dollar amount, or percentage amount, with only the change noted.
 3. Terms of Call and background or supporting material regarding terms of call shall be made available to both members of the Presbytery and the Presbytery Review Committee through the Presbytery Stated Clerk upon request.
- 25-27** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES Crossworld as an EPC World Outreach Cooperative Agency. **(Minutes 45-54)**

- 25-02** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES establishing full fraternal relations with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. **(Minutes 45-32)**
- 25-03** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES the preliminary Articles of Agreement with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. **(Minutes 45-32)**
- 25-04** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES revised Articles of Agreement with St. Andrew's Presbytery, Argentina. **(Minutes 45-32)**
- 25-28** The 45th General Assembly WITHDRAWS from the fraternal relationship with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar. **(Minutes 45-54)**
- 25-17** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES a “third year” for the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards to review and recommend any changes to ordination standards. **(Minutes 45-40)**
- 25-18** The 45th General Assembly DIRECTS the Permanent Committee on Theology to review the EPC Position Paper on Marriage and Divorce. **(Minutes 45-40)**
- 25-19** The 45th General Assembly APPROVES ordained ministers drawing retirement income from the EPC 403(b)(9) Defined Contribution Retirement Plan be allowed to designate up to 100% of their retirement income for housing allowance as permitted by applicable regulations adopted pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code. **(Minutes 45-43)**
- 25-25** The 45th General Assembly SUSTAINS the Permanent Judicial Committee's Rulings related to Beverly Heights Church. **(Minutes 45-53)**